



Michigan
Office of the Auditor General
REPORT SUMMARY

Performance Audit

Museum Artifacts and Archival Records

Michigan Historical Center

Department of History, Arts and Libraries

Report Number:
25-231-05

Released:
August 2006

The Michigan Historical Center's (MHC's) mission is to build programs and alliances that preserve and interpret Michigan's past and to help people discover, enjoy, and find inspiration in their heritage. MHC accomplishes its mission through the activities of its six organizational units: the Michigan Historical Museum, the State Historic Preservation Office, the State Archives, the Publications Section, the Archaeology Section, and the Records Management Section.

Audit Objective:

To assess the effectiveness of MHC's efforts in accounting for and safeguarding museum artifacts and archival records and in making these artifacts and records accessible to the public.

Conclusion:

MHC's efforts were moderately effective in accounting for and safeguarding museum artifacts and archival records and in making these artifacts and records accessible to the public.

Material Condition:

MHC had not completed a physical inventory of all museum artifacts in its possession. Also, MHC had not created and maintained a central recordkeeping system for its museum artifacts or periodically tested artifact records for completeness and accuracy. (Finding 1)

Reportable Conditions:

Our audit also disclosed reportable conditions regarding museum storage space, archival and artifact records,

museum artifact and archival record storage area access, and museum artifact loans (Findings 2 through 5).

Noteworthy Accomplishments:

The Michigan Historical Museum was granted accreditation by the American Association of Museums (AAM) in 2004. The entire Michigan Historical Museum system is one of only a handful of "museum systems" in the United States that have been accredited by the AAM.

During the audit period, the State Archives improved the public's access to both government records and private manuscripts through the use of private grant funds. The improved access included cataloging on-line 600 collections relating to genealogy and local history and indexing and imaging the State's 56,000 land patent records. In addition, over 1,500 photographic images of Civil War soldiers and the governors of the State of Michigan were also made available on-line.

Agency Response:

Our audit report contains 5 findings and 7 corresponding recommendations. MHC indicated that it agrees with all 7 recommendations.

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Michigan Office of the Auditor General
201 N. Washington Square
Lansing, Michigan 48913

Thomas H. McTavish, C.P.A.
Auditor General

Scott M. Strong, C.P.A., C.I.A.
Deputy Auditor General